THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS'

MILLENNIAL STAR.

[ESTABLISHED 1840].

"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (JAMES 1: 26).

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AUTHENTICITY OF THE BOOK OF MORMON.

To write about the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, at this time, is necessarily to repeat, to a very large extent, what has already been presented to the reading public by Orson Pratt, George Reynolds, B. H. Roberts, Dr. James E. Talmage, and other authors of standard Church works. The important subject is, nevertheless, again approached in these paragraphs, in the hope that through the blessings of God, perhaps an additional precious truth may be brought to light from the inexhaustible storehouse of evidence; and that some of the readers of the *Star*, especially those who are young in the Church or have just begun to investigate the claims made for that sacred volume, will find an attempt to state the case again, helpful.

The question of the authenticity of the books of the Old and New Testaments is complex, and in some particulars almost hopelessly difficult, because there is no copy anywhere of the books as originally written. The correct text has to be constructed by a minute comparison of the hundreds of manuscripts extant, with their thousands of variations or differences, and by examining old translations, fragmentary quotations, and targums. And after this immense task is done the question arises, Which of the books in the Bible were certainly written by the inspired men whose names they bear? A new line of research is then necessary. We must delve into history in order to ascertain what the testimony of antiquity is on the subject, and we must apply all the methods of legitimate criticism in order to form an idea of the scope of each book, the circumstances under which it was written, and the probable authorship. It is evident that an inquiry of this nature is far beyond the general reader, and that many are misled and fall

into the error of false criticism because of their inability to appreciate its reasoning at its true value.

In the case of the Book of Mormon no such difficulties present themselves. In this volume we also have ancient writings, extending over a period of a thousand years, from 600 B.C. to 400 A.D. They are the compositions of many authors, but handed down to us in an abridged form by Mormon and Moroni, in a language now, as far as known, extinct. The plates on which the text was engraved are not accessible, having been removed beyond human reach as soon as the translation into English was completed, this being the great purpose for which the record had been made and preserved. It follows that questions relating to the purity of the text, and even the correctness of the translation; and many other questions, more or less perplexing, are obviated. That simplifies the inquiry into the authenticity of the Book of Mormon. It places the man and woman without special learning, but with common intelligence, on a level with the scholar as far as the claim of the Book of Mormon is concerned. Each one can judge for himself of the value of the evidence presented, and the objections raised. No one depends for his belief in this matter on the conflicting and confusing representations of scholarship. Nobody needs to take anything for granted because of his inability to verify for himself the various allegations of scientists and pseudo-scientists. He can follow the case of this remarkable book with full assurance of arriving at the truth, just as a juryman, though not a lawyer, does a case in court.

I. The Witnesses.

In considering the evidence for the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, we naturally first turn to the simple narrative of the Prophet Joseph himself.

According to the Prophet's own statement, on the evening of the 21st of September, 1823, after he had held communion with God in prayer and supplication, Moroni appeared to him and told him of the existence of the plates and of his mission to translate the record. On the 22nd of September, 1827, he says the heavenly messenger delivered them into his hands. Joseph, as soon as possible, began the work of translating, by the aid of Urim and Thummim—two stones in silver bows fastened to a breastplate—and completed it in 1830.

There is no reason to doubt this testimony of the Prophet Joseph, any more than there is to doubt the statement of Paul that he saw our Lord and heard Him speak, on the road to Damascus; or that Daniel saw and conversed with the angel Gabriel; or that Moses had tables of stone upon which God had written the Decalogue (Ex. 32: 16).

There is, really, no other satisfactory explanation of the origin of the book. Joseph Smith could not, at any time, and especially

not in his early youth, have composed such a work. The antiquated Spalding Story, although adhered to by Schröder, Shook, and (according to an interview published in the Los Angeles *Express*, as late as August 12th, 1905), by Major Olmstead, is untenable after the discovery and publication of Spalding's long-lost manuscript. This is admitted by Prof. Riley, who says:

"In spite of a continuous stream of conjectural literature, it is as yet impossible to pick out any special document as an original source of the Book of Mormon. In particular, the commonly accepted Spalding theory is insoluble from external evidence and disproved by internal evidence" (*The Founder of Mormonism*, p. 172).

And also by Rev. D. H. Bays:

"The long-lost Spalding Story has at last been unearthed, and is now on deposit in the library of Oberlin College at Oberlin, Ohio, and may be examined by anyone who may take the pains to call on President Fairchild, of that institution. * * * The Spalding Story is a failure. Do not attempt to rely upon it—it will let you down.

"The entire theory connecting Sidney Rigdon and the Spalding romance with Joseph Smith in originating the Book of Mormon must be abandoned" (*Doctrines and Dogmas of Mormonism*, D. H. Bays, pp. 24, 25).

This is the verdict of all who have given the subject an intelligent consideration.

Nor is the conjecture that Sidney Rigdon had something to do with the composition of the Book of Mormon tenable. It is well known that Mr. Rigdon, at the time that volume was being translated, was connected with the Campbellite movement and was pastor of a church at Mentor, Ohio. Mr. Rigdon had never heard a "Mormon" sermon, nor had he ever seen a copy of the Book of Mormon till he was presented with one by Oliver Cowdery and Parley P. Pratt in the fall of 1830. It is an historical fact that Mr. Rigdon became a convert to the new religion through the preaching of these gentlemen during that visit. John Rigdon, a son of Sidney Rigdon, often stated that his father, many years after he became disassociated with the Church, solemnly declared, on being pressed for a statement, that he never heard of, or saw, the Book until it was presented to him by Cowdery and Pratt, and so impressive was this testimony that John Rigdon felt it his duty to join the Church, and did so. Those who assert that Spalding was the author of the original Book of Mormon manuscript, forget that the original was engraved upon metal plates, and that there is ample testimony to that fact. Eleven witnesses saw and handled the plates. The Spalding theory does not account for the witnesses, or the metal plates, and thereby defeats itself.

If, then, neither Rigdon, nor Spalding had anything to do with the authorship; and if Joseph himself could not have composed the

Book of Mormon, there is no way of accounting for its existence unless we accept it as brought to light by divine power.

We are not, however, confined to the testimony of one witness. Joseph's claims are amply corroborated.

What we may call the preface of the Book of Mormon consists of the testimony of eleven witnesses. Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris declare that they *saw* the plates, and *heard* the voice of God to the effect that the translation was by His gift and power. They declare that they examined the engravings; that an angel came down from heaven and laid the plates before them, and that God commanded them to bear record to the truth of these statements. Christian Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, Peter Whitmer, Jun., John Whitmer, Hiram Page, Joseph Smith, Sen., Hyrum Smith, and Samuel H. Smith testify that Joseph showed them the plates, and that they handled the leaves that had been translated, and examined the engravings. This is the testimony. The closest scrutiny is invited.

Who are the witnesses?

Oliver Cowdery was a clerk in a store until the winter of 1828-9, and then he accepted a position as teacher in the district school in the town of Manchester, N.Y. He was twenty-five years of age when he gave his testimony. Later in life he practiced law in the State of Michigan. David Whitmer was about the same age as Oliver Cowdery. He belonged to a prosperous and respectable family of farmers and was brought up in the Presbyterian faith. He lived to a good old age and was honored and respected to the last among his friends and neighbors. Martin Harris was an older man, being about forty-four years of age when he became acquainted with Joseph Smith. He was then a prosperous farmer and by no means credulous, which appears from the fact that he insisted on consulting a scientist before making up his mind, and that he went to New York for that purpose, where he interviewed Professor Anthon, after which he was fully convinced. The eight witnesses were, like the three, intelligent men, capable of observation and of judging for themselves as to the truth or falsehood of a proposition presented to them. All were, in other words, competent witnesses.

It is important to bear this in mind. Every one of these eleven witnesses enjoyed the confidence of their fellow citizens. They were capable of carrying on business with considerable success. They were in possession of all the privileges of citizenship, and their moral standing was irreproachable.* They were not deceived,

*I am aware that anti-"Mormons" have published alleged affidavits setting forth the worthless character of the Smith family. But independent investigators have long ago discredited such affidavits, which could be purchased very cheaply at one time. Professor Riley, in *The Founder of Mormonism*, page 66, with a keen eye to truth, observes: "No reliance

for they testified to what they *knew*, not to what they had heard from others. There was no delusion; all could not have been subjects of the same delusion, or hallucination. If eleven respectable men testify that they have seen a meteor falling at a certain time, and their testimony agrees in all essential particulars, it must be accepted as true.

But were not these men interested witnesses? Did they not expect a profit out of their testimony, and must it not be rejected on that ground?

The truth as to that is the very opposite. Joseph Smith, from the first day that it was rumored about that he claimed to have been visited by an angel, became the object of hatred and persecution. Joseph's friends shared this lot with him. And not only that, but they were required to make pecuniary sacrifices for the furtherance of the work. There was no profit in view. Martin Harris gave freely of his time and means. Oliver Cowdery gave his time, and the Whitmers their hospitality on a magnificent scale. They were all fully aware of the attitude of the world, and that persecution would be their reward.

Did they never retract their testimony?

Never.

Martin Harris did not accompany the saints to Missouri, but remained in Ohio. In 1870, however, he came to Utah, where he died in full fellowship with the Church. To the last he declared that his testimony was true. Oliver Cowdery was cut off from the Church in 1838, and remained outside for ten years. But during this time he, on every occasion, re-affirmed his testimony, and in 1848, at a time when the saints were exiled in the wilderness and had no worldly prospects, he came to Kanesville, Iowa, and asked for reinstatement as an humble member. He again declared: "I beheld with my eyes, and handled with my hands the gold plates from which it [the Book of Mormon] was transcribed. I also saw with my eyes and handled with my hands the 'holy interpreters.' That book is *true*." David Whitmer also was excommunicated in the year 1838, and never returned to the fold of the Church. He died in 1888, at Richmond, Missouri, aged 83 years. But during the fifty years he lived outside the Church, he never denied the truth of his testimony. On his death-bed, three days before his departure, he said to his family: "I want to say to you

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is to be placed in the multiplied affidavits of jealous neighbors, who swore on oath that there was much intoxication among the Smiths; people in those days had the affidavit habit." And of the Whitmers and the other witnesses, nothing but good can truthfully be said, as of the Smiths with whom they became intimately associated. If the Smiths had been the worthless characters they are represented to be, by enemies, neither the Whitmers, nor Cowdery, nor many others would have associated with them.

all, the Bible and the Record of the Nephites [the Book of Mormon] are true, so that you can say that you have heard me bear my testimony on my death-bed" (*Richmond Democrat*, February 2nd, 1888). Christian Whitmer was a faithful Church member when he died, in 1835. Jacob Whitmer left the Church in 1838, but to the last day of his life he testified to the truth of the Book of Mormon. Peter Whitmer, Jr., died in 1836, in full fellowship. John Whitmer was excommunicated in 1838. He died forty years later at Far West. In the midst of persecution he re-affirmed his testimony, and he continued to do so, till his death. Hiram Page severed his connection with the Church in 1838. He died in 1852. "Whenever he had an opportunity," says his son, Philander Page, "to bear his testimony to this effect [the divinity of the Book of Mormon] he would do so, and seemed to rejoice exceedingly in having been privileged to see the plates" (*Historical Record*, p. 614). Joseph Smith, Sen., the father of the Prophet Joseph, died in 1840, holding the high office of presiding Patriarch in the Church. Hyrum Smith, like his brother, the Prophet, was martyred for his testimony. Samuel Smith died in 1844, at Nauvoo, only a short time after the martyrdom at Carthage, faithful to the end. Of the eleven witnesses only four, David, Jacob and John Whitmer, and Hiram Page died outside the Church. Not one of them ever denied the truth of the testimony they had given. None of them modified it in the least. To the last they declared that they had seen and handled the plates. The three witnesses maintained to the last that an angel appeared to them, and that their knowledge of the things testified to was beyond doubt. They maintained this in the face of persecution and ridicule. They gave this testimony whether they were members of the Church, or not; and at a time when a reversal of it, or even a modification, might have been of both social and pecuniary benefit to them. No cross-examination, no change of circumstances, broke down that testimony which they had given to the world.

In any court of justice the testimony of a number of men of good repute and common intelligence, disinterested and in agreement on all essential points, is accepted as decisive in the most important case, even if life and death are involved; the testimony of these witnesses that they saw an angel; that they handled the plates and examined the characters engraved, and that the voice of God declared to them the divine origin of the Record, must be accepted as decisive, for the very same reason that any competent testimony is accepted in a court of justice.

(TO BE CONTINUED).

Two points in the adventure of a diver: One—when a beggar, he prepares to plunge; one—when a prince, he rises with his pearl.—*Great Thoughts.*

CONVINCED AGAINST HIS WILL.

THE following is a excerpt of a speech by Hon. J. F. Wilson, congressman from Arizona, before the House Committee on Territories, in refutation of certain allegations urged as objections to the admission of Arizona to the Union, at the time when the application of the people there was before Congress:

"I notice now another objection—that is the 'Mormon' proposition. It has been said that we are 'Mormon' ridden in Arizona, and that the 'Mormon' people are dangerous to society. The farther away people are from these people the more they seem to know about them. You find a lot of people who have never crossed the Mississippi River, who have never inhaled Western air, who have never seen a 'Mormon' settlement or a community of the 'Mormon' people, and they think that the name indicates what they charge and that therefore they rise up on a far-fetched presumption and through partisan feeling and dogmatism, and make the charges without knowing whether they are true or false. * * * They [the 'Mormons'] are people who attend strictly to their own business, they stay at home, they till the soil, they worship God according to the dictates of their own conscience; they pay their debts and they tell the truth. * * * I want to say, Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen of the committee, that I have reached my conclusions about the 'Mormon' people because I could not help myself. I did not want to. I believed the other way. I was as thin-skinned as some of these people who are here in the East howling against them; but since I have known the reverse of what I first thought about them to be true, I must admit it. I have found in favor of those people the facts I have stated, and these are the reasons I have for defending them here and elsewhere, and I shall do it though the sun shall shut off its light."—

The people of the United States who know the Latter-day Saints, and who are in daily contact with them as business associates, as friends and neighbors, have only good words for them. Their traducers are, generally, men and women who have a pecuniary interest in diffusing falsehood, and, frequently, they belong to a class whose testimony under oath would not be accepted as true in any impartial court of justice.

To get salvation we must not only do some things, but everything which God has commanded. Men may preach and practice everything except those things which God commands us to do, and will be damned at last. We may tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, and still not obey the commandments of God. The object with me is to obey and teach others to obey God in just what He tells us to do. It mattereth not whether the principle is popular or unpopular, I will always maintain a true principle, even if I stand alone in it.—JOSEPH SMITH.

THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MILLENNIAL STAR.

THURSDAY, JULY 29. 1915.

EDITORIAL.

SEARCH WITHOUT PREJUDICES.

A COMMON practice among anti-"Mormon" speakers and authors, when attacking the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is to ridicule its doctrines. They state these, not as the Latter-day Saints teach them, but as they appear to non-believers eagerly looking for a supposedly weak point from which to attack the Church. They make their statement of what the Latter-day Saints believe as ridiculous and absurd as they can, and then they go to work and show up the absurdity, ignoring the fact that it is entirely of their own conception. Failing to make an impression on the strong citadel of "Mormonism," which is built on the impregnable Rock, they construct in front of it a wall of rubbish which they demolish with great display, hoping to create the impression that they have rendered the fort itself defenseless.

Almost any anti-"Mormon" book or pamphlet we happen to pick up, illustrates this point. It is sure to contain some highly colored caricature of the "Mormon" conception of Deity; some false statement of our views concerning our first parents; original sin; the office and authority of the Priesthood; the atonement, and every other subject on which men form opinions, more or less at variance with each other. Sometimes the falsehoods are supported by alleged quotations from "Mormon" sermons, or writings, but these are then violently torn from the context and made to serve a purpose for which they were not intended; very often, however, the allegations made are not even thus supported, but stand forth as mere fabrications.

Intelligent people are not deceived by such tricks. If they want to learn the truth concerning the faith of any church, they take up the study of the works issued by authorized teachers of that particular church and compare them with the teachings of the Bible and such truths as they already are in possession of, and know to be true. Furthermore, if they are earnest, they will study any doctrine that appears new to them with a prayerful heart, asking at every step of the investigation for wisdom and light. But many are deceived and imagine that the crafty perversions of the doctrines of the Church are what the Latter-day Saints believe, just as many are more influenced by an absurd cartoon than by the most logical argument.

Let all such persons remember that if they permit themselves to

be led by the misrepresentations of adversaries, they must relinquish all religious belief and abandon every church, for there is no doctrine that cannot be mutilated and made to look absurd; there is no church that cannot be ridiculed.

Let them notice, first, how Catholics attack Protestants. We have before us an extract of a sermon preached by Padre Gandinzi at Rome, which may serve as an illustration. He said, in part:

"Italy is grievously troubled at present by the introduction of Protestantism. It has been brought into Rome. What has been its history? In the sixteenth century, a time when Italy was especially glorious for its letters, its arts, its influence over the world, a man arose in the University of Wittemberg, from whom everything was due as a Christian, a priest, a religious. He was its author. He was a man of unbridled passions; we have only to read his own writings to see this * * * O Tiberio, Nerone, Caligula! Your names have come down to us with evil fame; but this Martino Luthero is far worse. Take other specimens of Protestantism, and see what they were: Calvin, Henry VIII., Elizabeth, Bucer, Œcolampadius. Poor Italy! Land so favored by heaven, in the very centre of the Catholic church, how sad it is that the doctrines of such persons should enter you!"

The speaker ended with this tearful tirade:

"I can never read the history of Protestantism without horror at the cruelties, the wars, the disturbances, the destruction of monuments, the injury to the fine arts, the rivers of misery and blood. If we in Italy, after all our glories, our great men, our devotion in past ages, lose the one thing we have left, the Papacy, what will remain to us? Anarchy and petroleum" (Quoted from *Church Quarterly Review*, October, 1879).

Then let them notice how Protestants handle the Catholics. When Pope Pius V. said that the Protestants have no sacrifice because the Reformation abolished the mass, Bishop Jewel replied:

"Indeed the mass is abolished through the gracious working of God * * * They did tell us that in their mass they were able to offer Christ, the Son of God, unto God His Father for our sins. Oh, *blasphemous speech*, and *most injurious* to the glorious work of our redemption! Christ * * * is our sacrifice * * * How, then, saith Pope Pius, we have no sacrifice?"

While the Catholics accuse the Protestants of immorality, barbarism, and anarchy, the latter reply with an accusation of blasphemy and denial of the work of redemption. So easy is it for opponents of a church to find something in its history and doctrines on which to base a bitter accusation. In fact, infidelity has displayed much greater ingenuity in this line than its younger brother, anti-"Mormonism." It has reduced the entire orthodox theology to an absurdity, and capped the climax by the statement that, from a Christian point of view, faith is stubborn belief in a proposition, in spite of all evidence.

The first Christians were attacked in this same manner. Pagan philosophers told the people that the Christians were ignorant, superstitious brutes, whose teachings were dangerous to the state. The Nazarenes were even accused of cannibalism because they said that in the sacrament they partook of the flesh and blood of the Savior, whom they worshiped as "thy holy child" (Acts 4: 30). They were accused of incest as part of their religious observances, because they loved each other as "brother" and "sister." Paul, himself, was attacked by similar weapons. That is, his teachings were perverted by his opponents, a fact noted by Peter, when he says:

"And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given him hath written unto you; as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction" (II. Peter 3: 15, 16).

Nothing is easier, and nothing is more common among unscrupulous opponents of a church or a servant of the Lord, than this method of attack. They know that you can spill ink on the whitest table-cloth, and that the cleaner it is, the more conspicuous are the stains. They know that if everybody slings mud on one wall, it will in time be entirely covered, and that if falsehoods are repeated frequently and persistently they will be believed by a thoughtless multitude. And so the work of misrepresentation goes on.

Those who are concerned about their eternal salvation, and for that reason desire to know the truth, must search for it themselves with open eyes, and not blindfolded by prejudices. They must pray for light and guidance, and perhaps even make sacrifices in order to obtain it. Truth is, indeed, the "pearl of great price," which is obtained only by those who are willing to sell all they have in order that they may come in possession of a far greater treasure.

J. M. S.

INDEPENDENCE VOTES "DRY."

WE gather from an American exchange that the citizens of Independence, Mo., some months ago voted that city "dry," and that the closing of all the public-houses has had a stimulating effect on legitimate trade there, as in all communities where Prohibition obtains.

A gentleman who operates the Merchants' Delivery for twenty-two firms in Independence, has made special observations on that question, and kept a record of the delivery of goods to all parts of the town. According to the *Jackson Examiner*, he has made this statement:

"Within two days after the saloons were closed in Independence after the local option election, the C. O. D. packages began to increase in size. Within a very short time the amount of money collected by my boys in this way was fifty per cent. more than when the saloons were open, and now the amount is at least double.

"Before local option we collected every day from $75 to $100 for C. O. D. packages sent out from the firms we serve. Now our C. O. D. collections run from $150 to $200 every day, and more than that on Saturday. I think it means that people who before local option had only ten and twenty cents to spend for food now have forty and sixty cents. This is the way the increase comes, they are buying more than they did before, and only buy what they have the money to pay for."

That stands to reason. If every community would close the public-houses, there would be more money among the people for which to buy food and clothing, and for legitimate amusements and education.

The people have it in their hands to end the liquor traffic. They can vote it out of existence, if they want to; or, still better, they can kill it by keeping the Word of Wisdom. But they will not adopt either course, as long as they drink. They are blind to their own interests, when their brains are befuddled with liquor.

J. M. S.

"'MORMONISM' IS A PRACTICAL RELIGION."

In an address put forth to the world, a few years ago, by the Presidency of the Church, are found these words: "'Mormonism' is in the world for the world's good." We believe that is a true statement. If it be true that the world is better for having a good man live in it, then it must also be true that the world is better for having multitudes of good men living in it. "Mormonism" has made better men out of multitudes of already good men, and has even made good men out of bad men; but in all the history of the Church it has never made a bad man out of a good one, nor has it ever made men worse than they were before "Mormonism" found them.

Notwithstanding this, "Mormonism" has met with a very persistent and bitter opposition from our so-called Christian friends. It can not be claimed, in truth, that we are not a sincere people, for insincerity has never produced and never can produce that which the Latter-day Saints have brought forth, manifested in part by their strength and power in the world. They cannot be accused of impiety, because they have manifested a devotion to God, and have kept His commandments, so far as they understood them, from the beginning. It cannot be successfully maintained that we love ignorance and are a degraded people, because we present to the world an example of intelligence, and among our

people is found a spirit that yearns for knowledge and education. It cannot be said in truth that the Latter-day Saints are indolent, because, wherever they dwell, by their industry and their intelligent enterprise they have redeemed deserts and made them blossom and bloom with all that is beautiful, beneficial, and for the happiness of man. They have builded cities, towns, and villages, and filled the land with orchards, gardens, and farms.

The Latter-day Saints have been misrepresented with respect to their home lives, yet nowhere in the world can a people be found who love home more, who have builded more homes in proportion to their numbers, or who love their families more. We venerate the aged; we are always ready and anxious to help the weak, and never has the cry of the widow or the orphan ascended unto God against us. In our midst there can be found no poor to whose petition the Church has turned a deaf ear. Our religion is not a theory; it is a fact. Ours is not a mere confession of faith; it is a great profession with a splendid practice. Ours is not a faith that is dead, being alone; but a live, active faith, closely associated with a conscientious performance of good works.

We have not hung our hope of salvation upon a single peg, nor do we rely for our salvation upon one word of scripture. We believe not only the Bible, as a compilation of sacred books, but we believe also in the very contents of these books; and therein we differ greatly from our Christian neighbors. Those passages of scripture upon which they seem to rely most for their hope and salvation are: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever should believe on him should not perish but have everlasting life." We believe these words of the Scriptures, but we also believe in the Sermon on the Mount, which our Lord closes as follows: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matt. 7:24-27).—From an address delivered some years ago by PRESIDENT HYRUM M. SMITH.

OUR Father in heaven does not visit every place in person to guide and administer the law to the people, and to do this, that and the other; He never did, and never will; but He has officers, whom He sends when and where He pleases, giving to them their credentials and missions as does our Government to our fellowmen here.—PRESIDENT BRIGHAM YOUNG.

REFLECTIONS.

WHAT is truth? The question was proposed at a deaf and dumb institute, when in answer one of the boys drew a straight line. And what is falsehood? The answer was a crooked line.

The "Mormon" Church boldly claims that her teachings embrace or cover more divine truth than the teachings of any other church existent. According to the illustrative definition of truth given above, "Mormonism" should therefore be straight in its every aspect. Crooked men may have affiliated themselves with the Church; crooked judgment may have assigned the crooked behavior of individuals to "Mormonism" itself; but straight, and absolutely straight must remain every doctrine that has ever been embodied in the authoritative teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints if she is to successfully, and with good grace, maintain her claims. The word authoritative is used advisedly, as, alas! there have been quite a number of spurious promulgators of counterfeit "Mormonism."

The writer's acquaintance with, and study of the gospel, in the "Mormon" light, has only extended over five, short years, all that time—with the exception of a few months—in places where no other members of the Church resided. So far, therefore, his present testimony has developed, not so much by contact with the saints, as by study. That study has been divided between anti-"Mormon" literature and our own. The result is, that he has yet to meet any form of literary attack which, to his limited ability, has not seemed crooked in its course, or has utterly missed its mark. On the other hand, no words can express the gratitude of this heart for the clear, convincing and beautiful refutation contained in Church literature, of all the ugly accusations and doctrinal objections raised by those who oppose the work of God.

So inconsistent are all "enemy" books one has been privileged to read, that instead of having their desired effect, they have been great factors in the building up and strengthening of one's faith. Conversely, so beautifully consistent, to the minutest detail, is the Church literature, that when comparing it with that of the opponents, it is indeed Rays of Living Light as against ignoble meanderings of hireling priests; like joy and love-inspiring Articles of Faith against would-be ill-will and gloom-inspiring Articles of Doubt; or, finally, it can justly be compared to a divine vital force as against pious, highly ecclesiastical, but misdirected energy, sometimes well-meant and unbiassed, but, sad to discover, more often prejudiced and bigoted.

When, after almost a century, all efforts to satisfactorily prove a scriptural or even rational inconsistency in the Church teachings, have failed; when such efforts only increase the faith of members of the opposed Church; incite infatuated zealots and lawless mobs to persecute our people, but actually detract not an atom from the

validity of the gospel taught by the Church, it seems probable that the time is not far distant when many intelligent assailants will throw up their useless task, and like Paul of old, discover that in spite of their good intentions, they had been vigorously fighting divine truth.

One seems to recognize and feel that gradually, and almost unconsciously, a great reformation is taking place in the religious teachings of Christendom. Many sects to-day, some rather shyly, some clamorously, uphold and preach doctrines which not many years ago the "Mormon" Church was called everything bad for declaring to be divine, and to-day, singularly, ample scriptural proof is forthcoming from the various pulpits to substantiate their new teachings.

It is not chance coincidence that scriptural interpretations, buried for many centuries, but restored through the instrumentality of the Prophet Joseph Smith, are more and more, day by day, being adopted by leading divines throughout Christendom. It is but the natural outcome of the Rays of Living Light which the humble elders of Israel are spreading broadcast, incidentally spending much time and hard earned cash, as well as making countless domestic and other sacrifices. The net return for the "Mormon" elder's mission is not the one or two converts he may have led down into the waters of baptism; not the two from a family and one from a city gathered into the fold. It is also the world-wide influence emanating from his labors, affecting all classes of men, from the denominational lay-preacher to the great statesman, and all in good time the elder will have the satisfaction of finding that all worthy classes of society recognize the holy Priesthood as the source of many divine truths with which their minds have become acquainted. The mighty power of truth as diffused by the servants of the Lord is being felt throughout the world, although not recognized generally, from centre to circumference, and surely it seems positive to us, that not many years hence the members of the only true Church, the Church of Jesus Christ, will no longer be regarded as a peculiar people and setters forth of strange doctrines, but as instrumental benefactors to millions of souls at present on this beloved old earth. Then will it be universally understood what a fearless and straight course, through inestimable calumny, the "Mormon" Church has been steering during the short century of its existence.

Rhodesia, South Africa. EDWIN CIRCUIT.

IT is in vain to try and hide a bad spirit from the eyes of them who are spiritual, for it will show itself in speaking and in writing, as well as in all our other conduct. It is also needless to make great pretensions when the heart is not right; the Lord will expose it to the view of His faithful saints.—JOSEPH SMITH.

"SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD."

"The boast of heraldry,
The pomp of power,
And all that beauty
And all that wealth e'er gave
Await alike the inevitable hour;
The paths of glory lead
But to the grave."

In his beautiful elegy Gray has endeavored to emphasize just that which Christianity has taught for nearly two thousand years, viz., that those worldly things we are so apt to strive after, are positively valueless in God's kingdom. Yet the people of the world are content to cast aside and scorn the great truths which bring to them a knowledge and understanding of that kingdom. Avarice is perhaps one of the greatest powers of evil. It makes man unscrupulous in his aspirations, inconsiderate toward his fellows, and in his mad craving for wealth or power, he thrusts aside all good influences. If perchance he attains his desire he is invariably selfish and loth to assist others who are in need. We remember the effect of Christ's advice to the rich young man who desired to know, "What shall I do to be saved?" "Sell all thou hast, give unto the poor, and follow me." It was too much to ask, and he went away sorrowing. Yet, on consideration, we find that this was truly the only means by which the man could have demonstrated his love. Since he had "kept the commandments" from his youth up, they had become part of his existence and consequently cost him no effort. Had he acted upon the counsel of Christ, his glory would have been magnified a hundredfold because of the sacrifice he had made, and the suffering he had alleviated for Christ's sake. Wisdom and sadness go hand in hand, and this man most certainly suffered in consequence of his added knowledge, which pointed out the way to salvation he had rejected.

Nietzsche, the famous German philosopher and opponent of Christianity, utterly failed to grasp the joy of life. His mind was so distorted with variance with almost everything righteous, that he thunders out his verdict on Christianity in these lines: "To my mind it is the greatest of all conceivable corruptions. I call Christianity the one great curse, the one enormous and innermost perversion, the one great instinct of revenge, for which no means are too venomous, too underhand, and too petty—I call it the one immortal blemish of mankind." Little wonder, then, that his biographer, M. Mügge, describes him as a man whose loneliness weighed heavy upon him. Surely no man who has accepted the gospel and received the gift of the Holy Ghost could be so thoroughly abject. He sought consolation in the things of the world; but we know that this life is but a preparatory school wherein we gain that intelligence which is for our benefit in the life hereafter.

The power of man is decidedly limited; but, such as it is, it must be utilized either for good or evil. There can be no standing still; we must be going forward, or dropping back. The vast majority fall away by taking the line of least resistance, but the "almighty dollar" is invariably the incentive. Until mankind realizes that without true Christianity there can be no harmony among them, they can never appreciate the glorious promise, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all else shall be added unto you."

Birmingham. LEONARD J. PESTRIDGE.

FROM THE MISSION FIELD.

District Meeting.—Special services were held by the Leicester branch of the Church on Sunday, the 18th inst., at Secular Hall. President Hyrum M. Smith, President Ernest E. Greenwood, and eight traveling elders of the Nottingham conference were present. Two sessions were held, one at 2:30, and one at 6:30 p.m. Elder H. L. Frisby presided, and Elder George S. Ballif took charge. Musical selections were rendered in an excellent manner by the choir, under the direction of Elder Frisby, assisted by Sister Nellie Parker at the organ. The sacrament was administered by Elders S. C. Gerrard and W. H. Pyott, assisted by George Gent and George Parker, deacons. The visiting speakers were President Hyrum M. Smith and Elder J. M. Sjodahl. Others who took part in the exercises were Elders John Marshall, Charles J. Smith and Seth Bradley and the Misses Louie and Lizzie Welch. The meetings were well attended, and in the audience were many inquirers, some of whom had never before been in a "Mormon" meeting.

DIED.

KNOTT.—At Oldham (Manchester conference), July 6th, 1915, Joseph E. Knott. Deceased was born March 19th, 1891, at Ashton; baptized October 24th, 1914, by Elder A. D. Clark. Brother Knott was a faithful Latter-day Saint.

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